

JIM WARREN

DIRECTOR

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## CAREER OBJECTIVE

I believe that exposure to great art allows us to understand our humanity more deeply.

Understanding our individual and collective humanity helps us be better people.

Being better people makes the world a better place to be.

I want to create art that changes the world.

## ONGOING PROJECT: AMERICAN GLOBE CENTER

New England will soon house **the world's only timber frame re-creation of Shakespeare's 1614 Globe Theatre**, along with the **AGC Playhouse**, (a modern performing arts and education center with a state-of-the-art mainstage and blackbox), **an amphitheatre, gathering areas, gardens, and green space.**

The [American Globe Center](http://www.americanglobecenter.org) will be a regional, national, and international destination – performing engaging, heart-wrenching, gut-busting, entertainment-guaranteed classical theatre, alongside the best of modern plays, as well as trailblazing new plays, for thousands of visitors from all around the world.

[www.americanglobecenter.org](http://www.americanglobecenter.org)

## SKILLS SUMMARY

- Proven leadership, communication, and organizational dexterity in arts management
- Striking ability to recruit, cast, train actors to serve plays/teammates for long repertory contracts
- Honed expertise in editing scripts for large and small casts to tell provocative and fun stories
- Exceptional creativity that melds text-based core with stunning visuals and sharp language
- Inventive collaboration techniques built to maximize quality and create community in all departments
- Wide experience in all areas of business management and theatre making while growing the company
- Deft capacity to galvanize support for mission through writing and public appearances
- Indefatigable work ethic fused with boundless passion to inspire employees on all levels
- Seasoned capacity to show how great art can and should be great business for three decades

## EDUCATION

M.F.A. Shakespeare and Performance

Mary Baldwin University

B.S. double major in Theatre and English

James Madison University

University of London (semester)

Magna Cum Laude with Distinction in Theatre

Honors Thesis “Love Somebody: The Process of Directing *Romeo and Juliet*”

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## CONSULTING

### **2023-2018 Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV**

- led a strategic planning retreat for senior staff to review/recognize past accomplishments, conducted SWOT analysis, and planned for the future
- counseled, consulted, collaborated with RM Founding Artistic Producer and staff for six years

### **2023, 2021, 2020 Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival; Flagstaff, AZ**

- advised and collaborated with FlagShakes Artistic Director and staff on a variety of subjects, including COVID protocols, rehearsing and performing in rotating repertory, and doubling/casting practices

### **2022 Pigeon Creek Shakespeare; Grand Haven, MI**

- crafted workshops and consulting sessions with PCS leadership and company members

### **2019 Nashville Shakespeare Festival; Nashville, TN**

- supplied extensive input to the NSF Artistic Director and Board of Directors heading into a new chapter: hiring their first full-time Managing Director in thirty years, planning their first state-wide tour, and considering the possibility of building their own space

### **2018 Baltimore Shakespeare Factory; Baltimore, MD**

- consulted extensively with the BSF Artistic Director (a retired high-school English teacher who started his company 10-ish years ago after being inspired by my company), networked with local colleges for future BSF partnerships, and created four hour-long Shakespeare scripts to increase grant opportunities for Baltimore area schools (member of BSF Board of Advisors)

### **2018 Spring Semester Davis and Elkins College; Elkins, WV**

- collaborated with administration and theatre faculty, advised former ASC actor, chair of D&E Theatre Program, on how best to revitalize a small department in a rural college

## TEACHING

### **2020 January Term Hollins University; Roanoke, VA**

- created the curriculum/syllabus for and taught “Shakespeare Boot Camp”

### **2019 Stagedoor Manor Performing Arts Training Center; Loch Sheldrake, NY**

- created the curriculum/syllabus for and taught eight classes, including Shakespeare’s Verse and Tablework, Cold Readings, and The Art of Auditioning

### **2018 Fall Semester Hollins University; Roanoke, VA**

- created the curriculum/syllabus for and taught a 300-level hybrid Theatre/English class – “Shakespeare: Page to Stage”

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## 2018 Spring Semester Davis and Elkins College; Elkins, WV

- taught classes in Acting, Directing, and Stage Management

## WRITING

### “You Say You Want a Revolution...

#### Rebuilding the Theatre Industry from the Ground Up After Covid-19”

- a *Jerry Maguire* moment (without the morning-after regret) to lay out the harsh realities of the structure we have created and the hopeful possibilities of where we could go if we stop talking and start walking
- *American Theatre*, 29 October 2020

### “A Runaway American Dream: The Birth of the ASC”

- the preface to *Shakespeare in the Light: Essays in Honor of Ralph Alan Cohen*
- Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 23 July 2019

### *Looking Back with the Lights On: A History of the American Shakespeare Center by the Artists Who Built It*

- a full-length book in the works to tell the story of the ASC’s first three-decade era interlaced with actor stories

### *Shakespeare on a Shoestring*

- a full-length forthcoming book with edited versions of all 38 plays for 12, 8, and 3 actors using Shakespeare’s Staging Conditions on a tight budget – ideal for touring and suitable for mainstage productions

### *Doing It with the Lights On: Taking Our Cues from Shakespeare’s Staging Conditions*

- a full-length book in development with sections on Acting, Directing, and Producing Theatre of the Imagination for the 21<sup>st</sup> century – how adapting four-hundred-year-old principles is the secret sauce for the survival of the theatre industry (going “back to the future”) and how doing it with the lights on lets theatre shine and succeed in ways that trying to be movies and streaming onstage never will

## DIRECTING

Director	2024	<i>Shakespeare’s Villains &amp; Clowns @ the Globe</i> American Globe Center; Stratford, CT
Director	2024	<i>Julius Caesar</i> and <i>The Tempest</i> Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV
Director	2023	<i>Hamlet</i> and <i>Henry IV, Part 1</i> (remount) Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV
Director	2023	<i>Twelfth Night</i> and <i>Romeo and Juliet</i> Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival; Flagstaff, AZ
Director	2023	<i>Shakespeare in Love</i> Sweet Tea Shakespeare; Fayetteville, NC

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- Director 2023 ***Richard II, Henry IV, Part 1***; and ***Othello***  
Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV
- Director 2022 ***Love's Labour's Lost, Titus Andronicus***, and ***Cymbeline***  
Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV
- Director 2021 ***Much Ado about Nothing, A Christmas Carol for One***, and ***The Twelve Dates of Christmas***  
Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV
- Director 2021 ***Twelfth Night***  
Nashville Shakespeare Festival; Nashville, TN
- Director 2021 ***Hamlet*** and ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***  
Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival; Flagstaff, AZ
- Director 2020 ***No Spring Chicken***, by Ginna Hoben **West Coast Premiere**  
directed for filmed live performance  
Flagstaff Shakespeare Festival; Flagstaff, AZ
- Co-director 2020 ***Shakespeare's Mixtape***, adapted and directed for filmed live performance  
The Performing Arts Conservatory at Notre Dame High School; Clarksburg, WV
- Director 2020 ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, adapted and directed for filmed live performance  
to be distributed to every middle school and high school in West Virginia  
Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV
- Director 2020 **all-female *Hamlet***, adapted and directed for live Zoom performance  
Stagedoor Manor Performing Arts Training Center; Loch Sheldrake, NY
- Director 2020 ***Lady Balthasar***, by Ginna Hoben **World Premiere** staged reading for Zoom  
Southwest Shakespeare Company; Mesa, AZ
- Director 2019 ***Every Christmas Story Ever Told (and then some!)***, by Michael Carleton, etc.  
Nashville Shakespeare Festival; Nashville, TN
- Director 2019 ***The Tempest***  
Centenary College; Shreveport, LA
- Director 2019 ***Romeo and Juliet***, adapted and directed for 2019/20 Tennessee schools tour  
Nashville Shakespeare Festival; Nashville, TN
- Director 2019 ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, adapted and directed  
Stagedoor Manor Performing Arts Training Center; Loch Sheldrake, NY
- Director 2019 ***Twelfth Night***, adapted and directed  
Stagedoor Manor Performing Arts Training Center; Loch Sheldrake, NY
- Director 2019 ***As You Like It***  
Rustic Mechanicals; Clarksburg, WV
- Director 2019 ***Henry VI, Part 1***, Pop-UpRight Shakespeare  
Nashville Shakespeare Festival; Nashville, TN
- Director 2018 ***The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe***, adapted by Le Clanche du Rand  
Randolph College; Lynchburg, VA
- Director 2018 ***A Midsummer Night's Dream***, adapted and directed  
Hollins University; Roanoke, VA
- Director 2018 ***The Scarlet Letter***, adapted and directed  
Shakespeare Forum; East Harlem, NY
- Director 2018 ***Romeo and Juliet***, adapted and directed  
Shakespeare Forum; East Harlem, NY

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Co-director 2018 *King John*, directed by Tom Delise  
Baltimore Shakespeare Factory; Baltimore, MD  
Director 2018 *Hedda Gabler*, by Henrik Ibsen  
Davis and Elkins College; Elkins, WV

## THE FIRST THIRTY YEARS

**1988-2017 American Shakespeare Center** (*formerly Shenandoah Shakespeare Express*)  
FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**Growth:** Led the ASC from scrappy startup with a \$500 budget to international acclaim and a budget of \$3.8 million

**Tour:** Grew the ASC touring scope from 14 performances of *Richard III* in rural Virginia to over two hundred performances of three full-length Shakespeare plays and one modern classic in six countries, forty-seven U.S. states, and one U.S. territory

**Building:** Built the Blackfriars Playhouse, the world's only re-creation of Shakespeare's indoor theatre in September, 2001

### Economic

**Development:** Transformed quaint hamlet of Staunton, Virginia into a tourism and Shakespeare destination and an award-winning "best small town"

**Education:** Helmed an international classroom paradigm shift for teachers and students to see Shakespeare as an entertainer who wrote plays for the stage, not just a poet who wrote literature for the page

**Programming:** Cast and produced over 280 productions – Shakespeare, classics, new work

**Directing:** Directed 128 ASC productions, including 32 of Shakespeare's 38 plays

**New Works:** Directed and/or developed eleven world/professional premieres and conceived and developed Shakespeare's New Contemporaries to create a canon of 38 new plays by diverse playwrights inspired by and in conversation with Shakespeare's works

## ASC PROLOGUE

In 1988, backed by a \$500 budget and a dream, I launched the Shenandoah Shakespeare Express (with Shakespeare Professor Ralph Alan Cohen), which would eventually become the American Shakespeare Center. This first SSE twelve-actor touring troupe comprised of James Madison University students from Harrisonburg, VA began with a mission to use Shakespeare's Staging Conditions to recover some of the magic and joys in these plays that we thought had been lost in many modern productions. I directed the company's first show, *Richard III* (in which I played Buckingham) and led the troupe in a fourteen-performance trek to churches and high schools across rural Virginia. At twenty-two years old, I had no ambition to build a multimillion-dollar theatre company; I just knew that these staging conditions, a focus on the text, and re-creating Shakespeare's Theatre of Imagination allowed the world's greatest playwright to come alive for audiences of all ages and backgrounds. This grand experiment just *worked*.

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## ASC GROWTH AND THE TOUR

- 1988 started with volunteer student actors, grew to pay stipends
- 1992 played for Sam Wanamaker in London, Edinburgh Fringe Festival in Scotland, Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, DC
- 1993 began full-time, year-round contracts and played academic venues during school year, renting/ticket-splitting theatres in summer in Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia
- 1995 played for Mark Rylance and school tour of London, plus Paris and Neuss Globe in Germany
- 1995 added a second traveling troupe to keep up with demand for our shows/workshops
- 1995 workshops on the road morphed into NEH summer institute for college professors
- 1997 summer camp for high school students begins (still running decades later)

At first, my focus was on sharing the love of Shakespeare and how using the staging conditions for which he wrote allows these great plays to live and breathe as modern, visceral, in-your-face entertainment; I wasn't trying to build a sustainable business. If we had filled our available dates with gigs in Virginia, we would not have become a national and international company. But we kept getting requests to play further away from home and I realized that if we made the jump to paying actors full-time, we could tour full-time and make money full-time. "If you pay them, gigs will come so that you can pay them" was a big leap that could have sunk us; but it worked. And our business exploded.

A big part of our appeal, that led to our growth, was that using Shakespeare's Staging Conditions made us popular with a huge demographic. Kids who thought they hated Shakespeare would say "Who did the translation?"; scholars were blown away by how text-based our shows were; we allowed Shakespeare to be affordable, accessible, and "more fun than a Velcro wall." Our business was so successful that folks started to approach us about building a theatre. Or theatres.

## BUILDING THE BLACKFRIARS: THE ECONOMIC REALITIES

- BF cost: \$3.7million – raised \$2.4mil private/city/corporate and put the rest in a mortgage
- many non-Shakespeare lovers contributed to the capital campaign to boost economic development
- 2001 first performance at the Blackfriars was for the construction workers and their families
- 2000-2014 tourist dollars spent in Staunton, VA increased 91%
- Blackfriars visitors spend over \$15million in the Staunton area per year

In the late 1990s, we still had no interest in being anything other than the best darn Shakespeare touring company on the planet. A group from Richmond, VA approached us with the idea of building a Globe Theatre overlooking the James River and they wanted us to be the anchor company; we said we're in. Then a group from Staunton, VA approached us about moving our base of operations thirty minutes south from Harrisonburg to Staunton and building a theatre there; we said we're in. Because we wanted to continue being a touring company with a home theatre for the summer months (plus the Globe in Richmond), we thought about building a flexible black box so other groups could use it when we weren't. But what prevailed was: we'd spent a decade turning every large theatre and every hole in the wall we played into something that felt like an Elizabethan/Jacobean theatre; so we should go ahead and take the

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leap to build the world's only re-creation of Shakespeare's indoor theatre, the Blackfriars Playhouse. At that point we were looking at anchoring a Globe in Richmond plus the Blackfriars in Staunton while still touring the country for most of the year. "Thank God for unanswered prayers." The Richmond project fell through; we grabbed that architect to work on the Blackfriars; and we made long-term plans to build a re-creation of the 1614 Globe and turn our tiny town into Shakespeare Mecca by building both his indoor and outdoor theatres.

No blueprints of the original Blackfriars Playhouse survive. Our architect, the late Tom McLaughlin, did mountains of architectural detective work with us to devise a classic collection of Jacobean design elements found in buildings from the period that are still standing today. Everything in our Blackfriars has some strong historical basis for making it into the final designs.

## ASC PROGRAMMING

- 1995 first non-Shakes title on the road: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard
- 1999 first Shakespeare contemporary on the road: *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* by Francis Beaumont
- 2001-2002 I cast/ran three different troupes simultaneously to have one in BF, two on the road
- 2003 first resident troupe at the Blackfriars that did not tour; first Equity contracts
- 2005 first Actors' Renaissance Season using Shakespeare's *rehearsal*/conditions of self-direction
- 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010, 2017 new plays written for Blackfriars stage by diverse playwrights
- 2017 launched Shakespeare's New Contemporaries to develop a new canon of 38 companion plays

Leaving the lights on the audience who surrounds the stage and becomes a part of the world of the play because actors/characters speak directly to them is the most important of Shakespeare's Staging Conditions I developed at the ASC. Next on the list is true repertory: the same group of actors able to perform multiple titles on any given night. Throughout most of the ASC touring history, we offered three titles on the road with each troupe per year. I chose each trio of plays with an eye on giving our audiences a variety of dishes on which to feast: something serious, something fun, one of Shakespeare's greatest hits, something further off the beaten path, something bloody, something wacky, something with flashy swordfights, etc. I took that same thinking into programming each repertory season at the Blackfriars. Part of what made us successful is the 400-year Shakespeare bull market. Shakespeare has been required teaching/reading at every high school and every college in America (and abroad). We not only capitalized on required Shakes, but we also sought to show how much fun his plays could be for teachers and students. We deliberately went after bookings (and looked for grant money to help defray the costs) in underserved areas where our exciting shows and amazingly accessible workshops could make a real difference in how kids received the work of this old, dead, white European playwright AND how teachers understood and taught Shakespeare as well. One of our main goals in programming shows and workshops was to break down and eliminate ShakesFear. Seeing our brand of Shakespeare (which included casting actors of color and multigenders) allowed audiences of all colors, creeds, and backgrounds to see themselves in these plays, see their friends, their families, their communities, their leaders, who they want to be, and who they don't. Because of the difficulty many folks have in understanding and teaching

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Shakes, we empowered them by allowing them to *own* Shakespeare for *themselves*. Many students and teachers in our audiences, workshops, summer camps, teaching training programs, etc. still speak of the transformational experiences they had because the ASC propelled them to study Shakes in college, try acting, become better readers, rededicate themselves to different teaching methodologies.

Our ASC mission statement included the phrase: “explore the English Renaissance stage and its practices,” which means that we could/should not only do Shakespeare, but also his contemporaries, classics from every era, musicals, and new plays – as long as we used Shakespeare’s Staging Conditions for each and every production. I championed our mission in our programming that grew more diverse through the years. I created my own adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens that became a cash cow staple for our Holiday Season; I directed the world’s first completely “unplugged” productions of the rock musicals *Return to the Forbidden Planet* and *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*. And I conceived the ground-breaking, industry-changing, twenty-year new plays project/competition: Shakespeare’s New Contemporaries, in which the ASC seeks one new play written for the Blackfriars that vibes off each one of Shakespeare’s plays to partner and perform each pair in repertory.

## ASC EDUCATION

- 2003 first bi-annual Blackfriars Conference for Shakespeare scholars from across the globe
- 2007 my business partner publishes book *ShakesFear and How to Cure It*
- 2009 ASC partners with Shakespeare’s Globe in London for a year-long conference
- 2016 Doris Duke Foundation awards grant for ASC to help train ASL interpreters for Shakes

Most theatres today have education departments and programming, often created as “add-ons” to seek grant funding. Since our inception, the ASC has made education a cornerstone of our reason to exist. In the early days, we would not sell workshops by themselves to a potential client because we wanted our workshops and performances to work in tandem with each other, serving and feeding each other. Anyone who thinks they know something about Shakes and/or one of his plays can get in front of a class and pontificate; what made our approach unique was that our workshops (like our performances) focused on Shakespeare’s Staging Conditions and how Shakespeare wrote his plays to be performed (like tv and film screenplays) not read and studied as poetry in classrooms. In our early days, I trained our actors not to lecture at podiums, but to share their expertise in how we climb inside Shakespeare’s plays and staging conditions, to demonstrate the infinite variety of ways to perform a scene, to illustrate how Shakespeare used language and actors to create the illusion of darkness for a midnight scene in Macbeth’s castle on the Globe stage at two o’clock in the afternoon.

Teaching students/adults at every age level that Shakespeare was a rock star who wrote better gore than Quinton Tarantino, better dirty jokes than Dave Chappelle, better historical thrillers than *Game of Thrones* helps them let Shakespeare into their lives and knock him off the cultural he’s “good for you” pedestal that should be reserved for kale and flossing your teeth. Teaching teachers this stuff allows them to inoculate kids against ShakesFear before the kids even know that Shakes is supposed to be boring, stuffy, and too hard. In our early days, I taught all our workshops; then I taught actors how to teach them; then Ralph Alan



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Cohen helped train actors how to teach them. Today the ASC Education Department is led by a Director of Education who spearheads her staff to teach workshops/seminars in the Blackfriars and to train actor/teachers to do them on the road. But I have always loved teaching (I train actors in Shakespeare's Staging Conditions every day in the rehearsal room) and I look forward to having more time to teach and train in the future.

## ASC BUDGETING, MARKETING, AND FUNDRAISING

- in the early years I acted, directed, booked the shows, and ran the office from my apartment
- 1988-1999 I was officially the SSE Artistic Director and Managing Director
- earned/contributed income: 82%/18%

Again, when we were a small start-up company, I did it all. One of the great joys in growing the business was gradually adding new staff members who had more expertise in a particular area than I did. I'm proud of how we (particularly me working with a bevy of Managing Directors over the years) navigated the troubled budgeting waters of expanding our tour, losing our shirts but not going under during two European tours in the 1990s, opening our own theatre with twelve-month programming, surviving the Great Recession of 2008/9, and enduring the ups and downs of charitable giving. Because I've been in charge of the budget and day-to-day operations of our largest department (responsible for at least 2/3 of our income), I was the one who had to figure out how to slash the most when the economy tanked; and I had to figure out how to spend hundreds of thousands less while keeping the product on stage so great that the audiences never knew the difference. We operated in the black for my last seven consecutive years in large part because of a Board Finance Committee mandate of using a three-year rolling average for our income and then building our expenses around that figure (we spent a lot of years using other formulas that often resulted in mid-year cuts). I would find a creative way to say the following or ignore it if it weren't true, but: the fiscal health of the ASC was at an all-time high when I left the company.

I'm also proud of how I helped lead our Marketing Department and graphic designers and photographers over the years to create our look and messaging. One of the best things about starting your own company is that you get to do things and be things that you always liked in others (and stay away from the stuff you don't like about others). I worked hard to create a brand that took what could be perceived as an academic exercise on paper and positioned us as the creative cutting edge of classical theatre we became.

Because our demographics were so huge, we had to be careful not to come across as "too juvenile" when appealing to younger folks on social media, nor too stuffy/uptight when going after our older target audience. I art-directed our photo shoots and personally approved all of our photo choices because I have disliked the vibe most theatres get/give in their materials. I helped guide the creative work of talented graphic designers who won awards for their work with the ASC.

Our earned/contributed income ratio has always been a double-edged sword: look how much we rely on "pulling ourselves up our own bootstraps" and "paying our own way"; now look how pitiful our percentage of contributed income is in this era where most non-profit theatres are at 40-50%. I'm proud of how much

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money we earned in ticket sales, tour sales, education sales, merchandise sales, etc. And I'm also proud that we increased the amount of contributed income each year to keep pace with higher ticket sales each year. We did well, but we could have done better.

## ASC PARTNERING

- Mary Baldwin University runs a unique M.Litt/MFA program in partnership with the ASC
- Univ. of Houston MFA program: I auditioned/workshopped/hired UH actors since 2009
- Shakespeare Theatre Association: ASC a member org; 2004 hosted international conference
- Theatre Communications Group: ASC a member org
- Augusta Dog Adoptions: provided adoptable dogs for two different productions of 2GENTS

Local, national, and international partnerships help demonstrate an organization's maturity and commitment to reaching out beyond its own walls. Running a multimillion-dollar not-for-profit theatre requires so much focus and energy that it's easy to become too insular or myopic. Three decades with the ASC taught me a cornucopia of practical and big-hearted reasons to find ways to partner with other organizations.

## ASC MISSION AND AESTHETIC

ASC MISSION STATEMENT: *The American Shakespeare Center recovers the joy and accessibility of Shakespeare's theatre, language, and humanity by exploring the English Renaissance stage and its practices through performance and education.*

"Exploring the English Renaissance stage and its practices" means "using Shakespeare's Staging Conditions." Shakespeare wrote his plays for a specific kind of theatrical environment, and the way we often do theatre today is just different in a lot of ways. Assuming that Shakespeare was the Genius Boy we've been told he is since day one of public and private education, I thought that re-creating some of those staging conditions could unleash some of the magic found in the plays that can sometimes get covered up or lost when you play with all the technology and cool tricks we've invented in four centuries. The big elements in production that are the hallmarks of this style I honed/championed for three decades:

**SHARED LIGHT:** Leave the lights on the audience; put that lit audience on three sides of the playing area; get our actors and directors to find as many places as applicable to speak directly to that lit audience, including them in the world of the play (none of the Renaissance playwrights were writing for the fourth wall).

**DOUBLING:** Most scholars think Shakespeare wrote for a relatively small company of actors (the fewer number of actors, the fewer people that got a cut of the money!); nobody knows for sure how many actors were in the Lord Chamberlain's Men or the King's Men, some scholars think the number was higher – in the high teens or low twenties – and some think it was lower – in the mid/low teens; but many of his plays have forty or fifty characters, which seems to indicate that actors doubling (and tripling and quadrupling) was part of the fabric of the original performances. The biggest difference between what I did at the ASC

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and Shakespeare's company is that we hired women (who would often play male characters over the course of the rep).

**COSTUMES:** "Historically accurate costuming" the way we think of it today did not seem to be all that important to Shakespeare's company. *Julius Caesar* takes place in ancient Rome, but it has lines about doublets, clocks, and other Elizabethan norms that seem to indicate they had at least some anachronisms baked in (plus the Peachum drawing of *Titus Andronicus* seems to show some characters with Romanesque togas draped over Elizabethan tights and pumpkin pants and some smaller characters in full contemporary-for-Shakespeare's-time dress). We took that evidence as license to costume our shows with a variety of looks: Elizabethan, modern, mash-ups, and everything under the sun. But we worked hard not to do what's all the rage in the Shakespeare world today; we tried hard not to screw a concept on top of the plays that added another layer of story to what Genius Boy gives us.

**REPERTORY:** The scant surviving records from Shakespeare's time seem to indicate that they did not do long runs of a single title the way most modern theatres do. They performed a play once or twice, and if it sold well they'd bring it back for multiple single performances in the coming weeks/months/year. We thought it thrilling to give our modern audiences the joys of Renaissance repertory where you can see your favorite actors play different roles in different plays most afternoons of the week. We did "true" rotating rep where the whole ensemble was in each show, rather than have "stars" appearing in one show only.

**MUSIC:** We did all our own sound effects and music live and unplugged. Shakespeare had a soundtrack. Above the stage, musicians played an assortment of string, wind, and percussion instruments before, during, and after the play; so did we. His plays are sprinkled with songs for which lyrics, but not much of the music, survive. The ASC set many of these songs in contemporary style from folk to rock to jazz, and many hybrids. The result was emblematic of our entire approach: a commitment to Shakespeare's text and to the mission of connecting that text to modern audiences.

Combined, these staging conditions put the actors and the text at the heart of the productions rather than shows orbiting around director and designer concepts that seem to dominate modern Shakespeare performances. *I think today's audiences crave the kind of connection and community that's formed when we leave the lights on and we all travel together through each story.* The coolest thing about doing shows with these four-hundred-year-old staging conditions is that the stories play like modern, in-your-face, gorilla entertainment that sucks you in and knocks your socks off. *I believe passionately in going Back to the Future – that the present and future of live theatre rely on returning to Shakespeare's Theatre of the Imagination and shunning the technological trends of theatre of illusion where live theatre desperately tries to be movies.*

## ASC EPILOGUE

What I did at the ASC could not have been accomplished without significant contributions from thousands of actors, staff, colleagues, and clients with whom I've had the pleasure to partner over the years. This is *my* CV, so I need to take ownership of the accomplishments, but the collective and collaborative nature of my life's work and leadership style demands that I acknowledge all the non-cliché blood, sweat, and tears

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that so many others poured into the work I did at the SSE/ASC for thirty years. I could not have done what “I” did without it truly being “we.” Some give lip-service to collaboration; I’ve built my career and calling around it.

I’m looking for my next adventure. I’d like to bring the skills I’ve acquired, the knowledge I’ve gained, and the experience I’ve gathered to a new project and collaborate with a new team and new community.

## PERSONAL ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHY

Things I value:

**COLLABORATION & INCLUSION:** It’s at the core of truly great enterprises; we are all better at what we do if we value, trust, and depend on each other in a supportive and respectful environment that encourages participation.

**DIVERSITY:** Actors and leadership and staff of all colors, genders, shapes, and sizes allow for the greatest number of audiences and community members to see themselves in the stories on stage and in the operation off the stage.

**PASSION:** “Good enough” is not good enough, let’s be great. And the starting point for being great usually involves powerful points of view and robust opinions that make the most out of what’s in our heads and what’s in our hearts. I care about our people caring and want to harness that energy to help us find great solutions.

**KINDNESS:** The older I get, the more I value simply being nice. Nice folks finish in the best places.

**BEST IDEA WINS:** “We’ve always done it this way here” and “I did it this way at my last job” might be starting points for a discussion, but I believe the guy in the mailroom might have an amazing idea for making staff meetings more efficient and a woman in development might discover the best way to word the sales blurb for *Titus Andronicus*.

**BACK TO THE FUTURE:** I often think that our best paths forward in the present and the future come with a solid understanding about where we’ve been. Doing the research, having the conversations, and grappling with how others have solved similar issues in the past will often shed light on how we should move forward today and into tomorrow.

**FORWARD MOBILITY:** There is no “staying the same”: we’re either striving to get better or allowing ourselves to get worse. Sometimes moving forward we may stumble, but we can’t go anywhere just standing still.

**Here’s my version of one of the great speeches from the movie *Bull Durham*:**

I believe in the text, living thought, earning the pause, usually thinking *on* the lines rather than *between* them, and not slapping your thighs because you can’t control your hands. I believe great art can and should be great business. I believe working hard and having fun can and should be done simultaneously.

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I believe language-based plays are the best plays and that the glover's son from Stratford actually wrote his own plays. I believe in concurrently trusting the text and cutting it judiciously to make the promise of "two-hours traffic of our stage" a regular reality. I believe musicals can touch our hearts and stir our passions in uniquely powerful ways. I believe creating new plays is not something we do just to bring in grant money; I believe we need to create new plays to tell new stories that will become tomorrow's classics. I believe classical plays have stood the test of time for many reasons; I believe in finding those reasons to illuminate the truths that teach us something about humanity rather than thinking we need to reinvent the classics in ways that show off our own perceived cleverness. I believe in creating characters that audiences can care about so that the stories we tell on stage matter and are meaningful, from the wackiest of comedies to the deepest of tragedies. I believe live theatre can create community night after night in ways that are more palpable, immediate, and mightier than movies and streaming will ever be. I believe the future of theatre requires us to make room in our thoughtful, well-balanced programming for families and audiences of all ages (and at prices they can afford!). I believe that we do our best work when we find a way to care about it, even the most mundane data entry. I believe that it's ok to get excited about things that other people may not like or may find dorky. I believe we are better and stronger when we make safe spaces for a variety of opinions, points of view, and deeply held convictions. I believe in being kind to one another. I believe in being honest, truthful, and straight-up. I believe in the power of theatre, the joy of creating community between the actors and the audience, and how great art can make you think, feel, and giggle in sequence and all at the same time. I believe in serious fun.

## ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHY WHEN DIRECTING

I strive to be the kind of director and leader I'd love working with if I were still an actor: completely prepared but open to discovery and the input of others. I'm not fond of the poles: having everything or nothing mapped out before rehearsals begin. I better have ideas on how to stage every scene if nothing comes organically in the rehearsal room AND I need to be able to let go of all those ideas if what we do together takes us someplace else that's great. Many directors like to throw around the term "text-based" because they recognize it as an ideology they *should* be pursuing, but few directors truly walk that walk; I'm one of those few.

If I had to write my autobiography today, I'd call it *Looking for Baby Bear* because I've spent a great deal of time in my career so far sampling the porridge that is too hot and too cold in my search for "just right." When time permits, I like to explore the extreme possibilities in a scene, a production meeting, a budget conference, a staff meeting to see if there's something to be gleaned from considering a bed that's too hard and one that's too soft on our way to deciding what's just right for us.

Illustrating the Larger Philosophy.

I believe the text is the foundation of the story, whether it's Shakespeare, a musical, a contemporary, or a new play, and preparing the text is a director's profound responsibility. No amount of good acting or design can save a bad script. I'm fascinated and sometimes baffled by the work of editors and scholars, groups I also admire greatly. As good as the Arden third series and new Mermaids editions are for Shakespeare and many classical plays, I tend to want to create my own performance scripts so that I get to make the

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billion different choices between variants in the often-multiple surviving texts rather than leaving those choices to the editors. *Hamlet*, for example, is a great play that deserves all the hype it's gotten over the last four hundred years because it really is THAT good. As great as it is, however, it's also a difficult script to prepare for performance because we have a lot of material, several versions, and hundreds of word/phrase/speech variants to sift through in order to pick which words we're going to perform – and in which order! *Hamlet* comes to us in three forms – the First Quarto, the Second Quarto, and the First Folio – that vary from one another in small and large ways. The First Quarto is most likely the earliest printed version of Shakespeare's play and it puts the "to be or not to be" speech and nunnery scene before the "fishmonger" scene and the arrival of the players. Q2 and F put "to be or not to be"/nunnery later. The different scene sequences create noticeably different arcs in performances. I directed the play four times at the ASC and each time I worked up both sequences and used a coin flip (in a nod to *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*) during the curtain speech to decide which sequence we would perform that night.

But early modern plays are not the only ones that have multiple versions available to us today. The first time I directed *The Importance of Being Earnest*, I did not know that it has just as many versions and textual variants to consider as *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *King Lear*. Wilde added great jokes to his earlier versions; I kept a bunch of those. Wilde later trimmed some details; I retained a bunch of those cuts. Sometimes he expanded on his earlier work; sometimes he reduced and distilled. Sometimes he cut some wonderful bits and I added some of them back. Sometimes the editors and stage managers gave us some new gold, and other times what they did wasn't my favorite stuff. I sifted through the different versions to discover and provide my favorite mixed tape version of the script.

Yes, I'm a text geek. But the examples from these two plays are emblematic of my approach to directing and managing and leadership: see what's out there, listen to all of the ideas, consider lots of choices, then make the call that seems best.

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## FULL DIRECTING RESUME AND REFERENCES

Available upon request.

[www.jimwarren-director.com](http://www.jimwarren-director.com)